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MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Seventh meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 February 1999, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairperson: Ms. STAMATOPOULOU-ROBBINS (Representative of the Secretary-General)

Chairperson: Ms. ESHMAMBETOVA (Kyrgyzstan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

1. The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, said that the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child coincided with the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. Three new States had ratified the Convention since the Sixth Meeting, bringing the total number of States parties to 191.

2. The quasi-universal ratification of the Convention and the general interest throughout the world in the implementation of the rights of the child had resulted in an increasingly heavy workload for the Committee. In 1997, the Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, proposed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, had been adopted. The purpose of the Plan of Action, which was financed by voluntary contributions from States parties, was to provide substantive support for the Committee's efforts to help States parties to prepare their reports and implement recommendations, and to coordinate with partners within the United Nations system and with non-governmental organizations. He announced that the Netherlands had contributed $25,000 to the Plan of Action.

3. An amendment to increase the membership of the Committee to 18, adopted by the Conference of the States parties to the Convention in December 1995, would also contribute to the Committee's expeditious and effective fulfilment of its mandate. In its resolutions 50/155 and 53/128, the General Assembly urged States parties to take appropriate measures so that acceptance by a two-thirds majority of the States parties could be reached as soon as possible in order for the amendment to enter into force. As at 15 January 1999, the amendment had been accepted by only 49 States parties, and it might be necessary to take measures to encourage acceptance by the required number of States parties.

4. The Committee on the Rights of the Child had continued to discharge its responsibilities under the Convention competently and effectively. During the period covered by its biennial report (A/53/41), it had held its twelfth to seventeenth sessions and, since the issuance of the report, it had held its eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth sessions. In the course of those sessions, the Committee had considered reports submitted by 49 States parties to the Convention.

5. The current meeting had been convened primarily for the purpose of electing five members to the Committee on the Rights of the Child to replace those members whose terms of office were due to expire on 28 February 1999. The names of the persons nominated, as well as the States parties that had nominated them, were listed in document CRC/SP/24 and Add.1 and 2. An updated list of the States parties to the Convention and the texts of reservations, declarations and objections relating to the Convention were contained in document CRC/C/2/Rev.7.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

6. Mr. BOGOREH (Djibouti) nominated Ms. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan) for the office of Chairperson.

7. Ms. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan) was elected Chairperson by acclamation.

8. Ms. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan) took the Chair.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CRC/SP/23 and CRC/SP/27)

9. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to document CRC/SP/27, in which the Secretariat informed the States parties to the Convention that it had received a letter dated 11 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Italy requesting the addition of a new agenda item 5, entitled "Notification of candidatures to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Article 43, paragraph 4, of the Convention)", to the provisional agenda; if the agenda item was adopted, the subsequent items would be renumbered accordingly. She took it that the Committee wished to include the proposed agenda item in the provisional agenda.

10. The agenda was adopted.

11. The CHAIRPERSON drew the Committee's attention to rules 2 and 3 of the rules of procedure (CRC/SP/5) concerning the timely submission of credentials, and noted that the Secretary-General had not yet received proper credentials from a number of States parties presented at the Meeting. She urged the representatives of those States parties to see to it that their credentials were submitted as soon as possible. In the meantime, she suggested that they should be entitled to participate in the Meeting on a provisional basis.

12. It was so decided.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

13. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Group of African States had nominated Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), the Group of Eastern European States had nominated Mr. Gorita (Romania), the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had nominated Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay), and the Group of Western European and Other States had nominated Mr. Ball (New Zealand) for the office of Vice-Chairperson.

14. Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Mr. Gorita (Romania), Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) and Mr. Ball (New Zealand) were elected Vice-Chairpersons by acclamation.

NOTIFICATION OF CANDIDATURES TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (ARTICLE 43, PARAGRAPH 4, OF THE CONVENTION) (CRC/SP/1991/L.1)

Draft decision on notification of candidatures to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Article 43, paragraph 4, of the Convention) (CRC/SP/1991/L.1)

15. Mr. FULCI (Italy), introducing draft decision CRC/SP/1991/L.1, said that the following countries wished to become sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Moldova, Nepal, the Niger, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Thailand, Uruguay. That brought the total number of sponsors to 126.

16. Full respect for legality in the nomination of candidates to the Committee on the Rights of the Child was of the utmost importance. Article 43, paragraph 4, of the Convention stipulated that nominations should be submitted to the Secretary-General no later than two months before the date of the election and that the Secretary-General should circulate the list of all candidates to the States parties. Unfortunately, that article of the Convention had not been rigorously applied by the Secretariat. In practice, candidatures were accepted even after the expiration of the deadline, and the Secretariat did not circulate the list of candidates among the missions to the United Nations accredited in New York. That list could be obtained only from the United Nations Office at Geneva. The current practice was completely unjustified.

17. Paragraph 2 of the draft decision should be revised to read:

> "Recommends that, on the occasion of future elections of members of the Committee, nominations of candidates be submitted by States parties to the Convention in accordance with the two-month time period set out in the Convention;".

18. Mr. AKUNWAFOR (Nigeria) expressed his strong support for the statement made by the representative of Italy. Strict adherence to the provisions of article 43, paragraph 4, of the Convention, and the Secretariat's circulation of a comprehensive list of candidates would ensure the fairness, transparency and efficiency of the election process.

19. The CHAIRPERSON announced that Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jamaica, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Morocco, the Netherlands, Oman, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Kingdom and Zambia wished to become sponsors of the draft decision.

20. Draft decision CRC/SP/1999/L.1, as orally revised, was adopted.

ELECTION OF FIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 43 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC/SP/24 and Add.1 to Add.6)

21. The CHAIRPERSON said that, in accordance with article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, five members were to be elected for a term of four years by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States parties. The names of the candidates nominated by the States parties were contained in documents CRC/SP/24 and Add.1 and 2. Kyrgyzstan, the Sudan, Honduras, Fiji, the Czech Republic and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had withdrawn their candidates.

22. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Herasati (Indonesia), Ms. Ito (Japan), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) and Mr. Kondi (Albania) acted as tellers.

23. A vote was taken by secret ballot.

Number of ballot papers: 181

Number of valid ballots: 181

Number of members voting: 181

Required majority: 91

Number of votes obtained:

Ms. Judith Karp (Israel)	86
Ms. Elisabeth Tigerstedt-Tâhtelâ (Finland)	82
Mr. Yury M. Kolosov (Russian Federation)	76
Mr. Jacob Egbert Doek (Netherlands)	72
Mr. Amina Hamza El Guindi (Egypt)	72
Ms. Awa N'Deye Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso)	60
Ms. Deborah Thomas-Felix (Trinidad and Tobago)	60
Ms. Marjorie Elaine Taylor (Jamaica)	58
Mr. Ibrahim Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Sheddi (Saudi Arabia)	56
Mr. Mustapha Denial (Morocco)	47
Ms. Rita-Félicité Sodjiedo Hounton (Benin)	45
Ms. Lina B. Laigo (Philippines)	41
Mr. Osvaldo I. Torres Gutiérrez (Chile)	36

Mr. Nihad Hanbali (Syrian Arab Republic)	29
Mr. Tirtha Man Shakya (Nepal)	19
Mr. Jorge Vila Despujol (Bolivia)	18
Mr. Tedla Diressie (Ethiopia)	16
Ms. Phetsile Kholekile Dlamini (Swaziland)	10

24. The CHAIRPERSON said that, since no candidate had obtained the required majority, the 10 candidates who had obtained the highest number of votes would be put to a second vote by secret ballot, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure.

25. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Herasati (Indonesia), Ms. Ito (Japan), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) and Mr. Kondi (Albania) acted as tellers.

26. A vote was taken by secret ballot.

Number of ballot papers: 181

Number of invalid ballots: 1

Number of valid ballots: 180

Number of members voting: 180

Required majority: 91

Number of votes obtained:

Mr. Jacob Egbert Doek (Netherlands)	98
Ms. Awa N'Deye Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso)	98
Ms. Judith Karp (Israel)	97
Mr. Amina Hamza El Guindi (Egypt)	94
Ms. Elisabeth Tigerstedt-Tähtelä (Finland)	82
Mr. Yury M. Kolosov (Russian Federation)	81
Ms. Marjorie Elaine Taylor (Jamaica)	75
Ms. Deborah Thomas-Felix (Trinidad and Tobago)	75
Mr. Ibrahim Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Sheddi (Saudi Arabia)	69
Mr. Mustapha Denial (Morocco)	57

27. Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Jacob Egbert Doek (Netherlands), Mr. Amina Hamza El Guindi (Egypt), Ms. Judith Karp (Israel) and Ms. Awa N'Deye Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) were elected members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

28. The CHAIRPERSON said that, since only four candidates had obtained the required majority for election as members of the Committee, a third ballot, restricted to the two candidates who had obtained the next largest number of votes, would be held to fill the remaining vacancies on the Committee, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure.

29. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Herasati (Indonesia), Ms. Ito (Japan), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) and Mr. Kondi (Albania) acted as tellers.

30. A vote was taken by secret ballot.

Number of ballot papers: 179

Number of valid ballots: 179

Abstentions: 3

Number of members voting: 176

Required majority: 89

Number of votes obtained:

Ms. Elisabeth Tigerstedt-Tähtelä (Finland)	96
Mr. Yury M. Kolosov (Russian Federation)	80

31. Having obtained the required majority, Ms. Elisabeth Tigerstedt-Tähtelä (Finland) was elected a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

32. Mr. ESTÉVEZ-LÓPEZ (Guatemala), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, said he regretted that the principle of equitable geographical distribution had not been respected in the election, since none of the four candidates from the Group had been elected. The Group's representation in the Committee on the Rights of the Child had thereby been reduced by 50 per cent.

STATUS OF THE AMENDMENT TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC/SP/25)

33. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to a note by the Secretary-General (CRC/SP/25) on the status of the amendment to the Convention increasing the membership of the Committee on the Rights of the Child from 10 to 18.

OTHER MATTERS (CRC/SP/26)

34. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to a note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention (CRC/SP/26).

35. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) asked whether individual contributions under the Plan of Action were acceptable, since one of the donors listed in the annex on contributions received under the Plan was an individual.

36. Ms. STAMATOPOULOU-ROBBINS (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that individual contributions under the Plan of Action were acceptable, as were individual contributions to other voluntary funds administered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

37. The CHAIRPERSON declared closed the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.